

Serial No. 09/786,274

Attorney Docket: 1662/49745

REMARKS

In response to the Official Action dated July 23, 2002, Applicant amends the application and requests reconsideration. In the Amendment, claim 24 has been amended, and claim 81 has been cancelled. No new matter has been added. Claims 24, 25 and 54-80 are now pending and under examination.

Claims 24, 25 and 54-81 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over, EPO 0 580 382. For the reasons set forth hereinafter, it is respectfully submitted that claims 24, 25 and 54-80, as amended, are not anticipated by, and are patentable over, EPO 0 580 382.

Amended claim 24 discloses a number of patentable features that are not disclosed or suggested by EPO 0 580 382. For example, amended claim 24 recites that the at least one sensor is not rigidly attached to the control device and that a flexible electrical connection is provided between the at least one sensor and the control device. In the embodiment shown in the drawings, for example, the sensor (8) is not rigidly attached to the control device (27) and that a flexible electrical connection (10) is provided between the sensor (8) and the control device (27). In EPO 0 580 382, on the other hand, the sensor (138) is rigidly attached to the circuit board (165). Therefore, this feature of amended claim 24 is not disclosed or suggested by EPO 0 580 382.

This feature of the claimed invention provides a number of advantages to the pressure control device of amended claim 24. For example, because the sensor is not rigidly attached to the control device, the pressure forces acting on the sensor are not applied to the control device when the sensor is sensing fluid pressure, preventing damage to the control device. In addition, the movement of the sensor under pressure does not put stress on the control device.

For another example, because the sensor is not rigidly attached to the control device, it can be more easily replaced.

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In EPO 0 580 382, on the other hand, the sensor (138) is rigidly attached to the circuit board (165). Therefore, even if only the sensor is damaged, replacement of the sensor requires the replacement of the entire circuit board. In addition, replacement of the circuit board is time-consuming and costly. Further, if the circuit board is damaged, the pressure sensor must also be replaced, increasing the costs of replacing the circuit board.

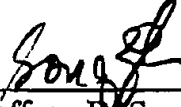
In view of the above discussion, amended claim 24, and claim 25 and 54-80 which depend from amended claim 24, are not anticipated by, and are patentable over, EPO 0 580 382.

The rejection of claim 81 is rendered moot by its cancellation.

In light of the foregoing remarks, this application is considered to be in condition for allowance, and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS SHOWING CHANGES MADE**IN THE CLAIMS**

Claim 81 has been cancelled.

Claim 24 has been amended as follows:

24. (Twice amended) A pressure control device for a vehicle, comprising:

a control device;

at least one of a mechanical, pneumatic and hydraulic element coupled with the control device, wherein at least one of a recess and a hole is provided in at least one of the control device and the element;

at least one sensor which is accommodatable at least partially in the at least one of the recess and the hole, wherein the at least one sensor is not rigidly attached to the control device, and a flexible electrical connection is provided between the at least one sensor and the control device; and

a bending resistant element operatively coupled to the at least one sensor to absorb pressure forces acting on the at least one sensor.